



VELLEX

Real-life accounts of how the National Workforce Development Fund is benefiting Australian transport and logistics enterprises.



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Training is a direct route to improved competitiveness, customer service, compliance and culture for transport and warehousing specialists Vellex.

“A lot of our guys, their initial training had been under the old regime, and the scope of that has changed,” says Vellex human resources manager Michael Frost.

“We’ve reviewed the competencies and updated the ‘skill set’ to what the current rules are, so it brings them up to date and reinforces our policies and procedures as a company, particularly from a health and safety point of view,” he says.

Vellex mainly deals in general freight, also known as cross docking: collecting, warehousing then distributing a customer’s product. It also deals in third-party logistics, or 3PL, where it can add packing to the process on a customer’s behalf.

The company’s specialty is bulk distribution, in particular, freighting live plants using cages and pallets to retail nurseries across New South Wales and Victoria.

The job requirements, for both drivers and warehouse staff, include handling dangerous goods, load restraint, mass management, and fatigue abatement.

“Those are the core modules we’ve been working on with our training partner, Registered Training Organisation (RTO) Strategix Training,” Frost says. “The difference between Strategix and other companies is that they work in transport.

“They put us in touch with the Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council. TLISC came out and went through the National Workforce Development Fund application process with us in a lot more detail.”

Frost believes his workforce has been more receptive to training and assessment because an external provider has delivered it to an industry agreed standard.

“By using a third party, people are more receptive, they take it seriously, and see we are investing in them. The National Workforce Development Fund allowed us to engage Strategix as a third party to come in and train our staff.”

“We’ve only been training for about six months, but people have been receptive to it, embraced the opportunity, even guys who have been here 12, 13, 14 years.”

Strategix has put 53 participants through the program in its inaugural year, towards Certificate IIIs in Warehousing Operations and Driving Operations.

Part of the program includes an accredited “eco drive” program, Clean Fleet, giving drivers the on-road skills to reduce emissions by putting a driver-trainer in the truck cabin to coach and correct technique.

The Clean Fleet program has delivered an unexpected benefit in competitiveness.

Drivers can “reduce fuel use by gearing at the right time and braking effectively”. Driving ecologically “also delivers longevity of the vehicles, so it makes business sense. The National Workforce Development Fund has allowed us to do that.”

And the training benefits don’t stop there. “We’re getting feedback from customers to say we’re doing a better job,” Frost says.

“From a business point of view, the freight is less damaged because it’s secured correctly, and the paperwork and administration is being completed correctly. So this funding is a pathway to resolving several systemic issues in the business.”

The training also ensures Vellex complies with legal requirements, known in the industry as “the Chain of Responsibility”, to prevent breaches of road transport laws.

“The Chain of Responsibility goes right back to the consignment: that it is fit for transport, that the pallet is correctly loaded, and that the load is secure. A pallet, if it’s not safely positioned and secured, could become a hazard in transit.”

But for Frost, “training is not just about compliance, it’s about building a culture.”

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“While we adhere to legal requirements, we’re also about what’s safe for the driver, for the company and for the public. We’re trying to change the image of the transport industry, which has taken a hit in the media for tampering with speed-limiters, poor loading, fatigue – and we don’t condone any of that.”

Training and assessment has been a “good promotion” of both compliance and culture for Vellex. “We can see our policy and procedures are being followed since the training commenced, so that’s been a positive,” Frost says.

“Incidents are now being reported, not that we have a lot of incidents, but they’re being reported. We’re saying to the workforce, it’s not a negative that an incident has occurred. We just want to know about it so we can work on improving it.”

Vellex sees the training as a mechanism for retention and, hopefully, attraction. It’s already helped promote drivers into roles as managers, and Frost appreciates how trainees become “champions ... role models of what we’re trying to deliver”.

Frost says Vellex would also love to see its National Workforce Development Fund initiatives “make us an employer of choice among potential employees”.

“We would love to be out there saying, this is how we treat our staff,” but as a priority, “we want to make sure our people can do their job safely and get home. This training, under the National Workforce Development Fund, effects that.”

Vellex is a family owned and operated business delivering efficient end-to-end supply chain accountability through its warehousing, distribution and transport services. This includes a specialised plant distribution system throughout metropolitan and country New South Wales.



Cross-borders

Established in 1985, Vellex's network spans across New South Wales and Victoria.



Clean & green

Vellex participates in NSW Government's Clean Fleet; an audited maintenance program, designed to improve air quality by reducing diesel vehicle emissions.



NWDF value

Total value of NWDF program to date:
\$189,300.



Niche market

Their specialised plant racking and logistic systems ensure that plants arrive at their destination in peak condition.

For more information about how TLISC can assist your enterprise in accessing the National Workforce Development Fund, please contact our Workforce Development team:

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